The Aliens Brought Pancakes

The Joe Simonton UFO Mystery

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On April 18 1961, three aliens allegedly landed in a flying saucer on the Eagle River, Wisconsin property of Joe Simonton. Simonton, a chicken farmer, claimed that the extraterrestrials presented him with a parting gift: a stack of pancakes that they had been nonchalantly grilling within their craft.

Perhaps it was the fact that Simonton not only reported the UFO encounter, but had in his possession honest-to-God pancakes from the Unknown that prompted the U.S. Air Force to conduct a thorough investigation. I mean, you can make fun of a guy who talks about aliens all you want...but it's hard to laugh in the face of a stack of pancakes.

And so the Air Force dutifully asked for a full analysis of the pancakes from the Food and Drug Laboratory of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The official finding by the lab was that it was a quite ordinary, if not somewhat healthful, stack of pancakes: made of hydrogenated fat, starch, buckwheat hulls, soya bean hulls and wheat bran.

At which point we must firmly apply the sharp but ultimately loving pressure of Occam's razor to the entire affair, and ask ourselves if Simonton was attempting to, as they say, "pull a fast one."

Not so, said Dr. J. Allen Hynek, who investigated the case on behalf of the U.S. Air Force. "There is no question that Mr. Simonton felt that his contact had been a real experience."

Famed astronomer/UFO researcher Jacques Vallée and author Robert Anton Wilson also believed that Simonson was sincere.

Ah, but there is the rub...Mr. Simonton might have felt it was a real experience...but perhaps he was somehow deceived. If we are to apply Occam's razor to the situation taking into account the chicken farmer's apparent sincerity, that is the only reasonable answer—outside of Simonton himself having a genuine psychotic episode that he doesn't remember, during which he somehow made or acquired a stack of semi-palatable pancakes.

Did somebody pull a prank on Joe Simonton? He described the three humanoid aliens from the ship as looking like Italians (!). Of course, Italians are known to be quite wily and great cooks. Perhaps Occam's razor has once again solved the case.

Or did something just really freakin' *weird* happen to Joe Simonton? Did some type of entity—call them aliens, or angels, or inter-dimensional Italians, or whatever—visit him and saw fit to gift him with pancakes? And if so...WHY PANCAKES???

OK, OK...here are 4 possible broad explanations for the pancake mystery:

1) Simonton carried out a deliberate hoax, regardless of what Hynek, Vallée, and Wilson suggest.
2) Simonton sincerely believed aliens gave him the pancakes—but had some sort of psychotic episode, or was perhaps under the influence of some sort if intoxicant. He hallucinated the UFO and the aliens, and maybe, in a fugue state, snatched a pile of pancakes of the windowsill of Mrs. O'Leary down the lane.

3) Somebody, of decidedly human origin, deliberately fooled Mr. Simonton. Perhaps some local teenagers pulling an elaborate prank...or some sort of psychological/propaganda experiment conducted by scientists, the government, Russian agents, the Bavarian Illuminati, etc.
4) Something really really weird happened to Joe Simonton.

We can simplify the above list in such a way that might assist in the evaluation of all sorts of other unexplained and bizarre phenomena:

1) Liar
2) Crazy
3) Duped
4) Weird Shit

And the Air Force's verdict on the Simonton pancake incident?

"Unexplained."

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